

TRADE AREA: OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS

Some possible workplace hazards and possible ways for Host employers and Apprentices/Trainees in controlling these hazards.

What are possible hazards?	What could be possible control measures?
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting, repetitive motions, awkward postures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employees/staff trained how to lift properly and perform their particular task safely • Mechanical aids provided to assist lifting (e.g. height adjustable trolleys, platform ladders, Step stools with hand rails) • Reduce work reaching above shoulders for extended periods of time • Storage is at waist height • Where heavy, bulky or awkward objects are moved in and out of vehicles, ensure that the load can be slid to/from a trolley • Select and purchase the lightest equipment • Workstations are set up to ensure staff are not lifting frequently used objects at the limits of their reach • Rules for correct lifting displayed in prominent work locations • Rotate workers through a variety of tasks • Good lighting in place to clearly see what the worker is doing and where the worker is going • Regular breaks scheduled to vary postures • Exercise: warm up/stretch before starting work, and cool down/stretch at end of the shift or working day • First aid kits available and fully stocked • First aid kit regularly checked. • Workers have access to people trained in first aid • Ensure building layout/design limits the need to push, pull or carry equipment (e.g. goods lifts, car parking is nearby, steps & entry doors are designed for people handling loads etc)
Slips, trips and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all working areas and access ways are clean, level, well-lit, and in good repair • Access to work areas are not cluttered • Wear sensible non-slip footwear where necessary • Floor surfaces are non-slip • Chairs must be appropriate for the floor surface (e.g. castors on carpet, gliders or castors fitted with brakes for timber , concrete or vinyl floors) • Ensure level footing through work areas • Files/boxes/books etc kept off the floor • Electrical leads are moved away from walking areas • When accessing heights, platform ladders, step stools with hand rails available and used • No temporary or permanent obstructions in the workplace (e.g. more points are installed to eliminate long power leads, ensure rugs and carpets are secure) • Good housekeeping principles in use (e.g. unnecessary items are removed, items are put away, doors and drawers are closed after use, regular rubbish removal) • Procedures in place to handle spills and wet cleaning (e.g. warning signs, barriers and immediate clean up)
Electrical equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test & tag & inspect electrical equipment & appliances regularly • Ensure electrical cords are not frayed/defective • Ensure electrical cords do not pose a tripping hazard (e.g. floor is clear of trailing cords and leads are moved away from walking areas) • Training provided in use of fire protection equipment • Fire warden in place • Document & rehearse emergency procedures
Indoor air pollutants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate photocopiers in well ventilated areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate local exhaust ventilation • Appropriate air conditioning system in place • First aid officer in place • First aid kits available and regularly checked • Check the filtration system for water coolers • Carpets steam cleaned, sanitized & had anti-bacterial agent added • Regular checks by a reputable company if there are airborne contaminants present (e.g. dust, gases, fumes, mists, fibres etc)
Ergonomic issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular assessment of workstation layout to minimize soft tissue injuries- redesign may be required • Adjust workstation to fit operator • Adjustment mechanism does not create a risk from manual handling • Design of the workstation has flexibility and adjustability so individuals can control how their workstation is set up & organized to met the changing demands& variety of tasks they perform • Chairs in use are fully adjustable • Staff are given instruction on how to adjust their chairs and layout of their workstations • Footrest available for workers who requires one • Computer screens are approximately an arm's length from where they are sitting • Top of the computer screen is level or slightly lower than their eyes. • No obstacles under desks to prevent staff from sitting comfortably • Adequate space underneath desk to swivel knees 90 degrees in each direction • Headphones provided for staff that spend extended time on the phone • Phone positioned so that there is no need to reach across the desk • Heavy items and files are in close reach • Separate workstations available for non-computer work
Repetitive work actions e.g. data entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff tasks are varied allowing one set of muscles to rest while using another set • Staff take regular rest breaks away from their computer to relax the eyes/mind/body • Staff induction on manual handling hazards • On-line manual handling training • Stretching exercises to release tension & get the blood flowing • Use automated/motorized equipment for large volumes of work
Sustained mental effort/postures during peak demand periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest breaks taken to relax the body/mind/eyes • Conducive workstation setup for staff • Reminder of critical tasks given out earlier to staff to time manage • Regular team meetings for staff/worker input • Noise control consideration taken • Air quality controlled • Adequate lighting, heat and cooling provided • Contact person/mentor in place as a support • Training provided in work-related stress, time- management, mental health and well-being. • Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in place • Return to Work officer in place
Privacy issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locked filing cabinets in place and used to store confidential information • Privacy awareness provided at inductions • Confidentiality is an agenda item on team meetings • Company has a Privacy Policy & policy is displayed • No sharing of computer passwords • Files/documents that may contain confidential information not left on unattended workstations • On-line Privacy Training provided
Environmental issues (e.g. working in extreme weather conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulated air conditioning in place • Windows that open • Regular maintenance of air conditioning units • Checks undertaken by external experts to check that airborne contaminants such as dust, gas, fumes fibres, mists etc are not present in the atmosphere

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-schedule times of work • Send workers home • Working in extreme weather conditions policy in place
Noise (including printers, telephones, fax machines, folding machines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are not exposed to noise that exceeds the national exposure standard (more than 85 dB) • A risk assessment on noise has been conducted where it is likely that workers are exposed to noise levels of 85 dB • Separate workers from noisy activities • Noisy items/machines moved away from staff work areas • Source of the excessive noise is eliminated • Noisy equipment positioned away from other work areas • Temporary sound absorption screen or barrier to protect persons in the area e.g. ply or polystyrene • Hearing protection provided and worn • Warning signs placed in areas of excessive & continual noise • Select the quietest equipment if possible • Replace loud equipment
Hot weather conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work re-scheduled when extreme weather conditions present risk • Regular rest breaks provided • Water facilities available • Dressed appropriately for the conditions • Ventilation or air conditioning operating efficiently • Ventilation or air conditioning maintenance/inspection carried out regularly • Windows that can open • WorkSafe- Working in Heat document
Poorly maintained heating, ventilation or air conditioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that maintenance/inspection is carried out regularly • Ensure that maintenance/inspection is documented regularly • Regulated air conditioning in place
Poor lighting Glare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-design poorly lit work-stations • Provide shades where practicable • Provide task lamps where practicable • Incoming light is controlled • Workstations positioned as much as practicable to eliminate /minimize glare on computer screen • Blinds are in place • Regular rest breaks are taken to relax eyes • Regular maintenance of lighting system/strength
Contact with substances classified as hazardous/Dangerous goods- (e.g. cleaning chemicals, printer/photocopier chemicals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish & communicate First Aid & emergency procedures • Use least hazardous product for the task or alternate (safer) substances • Adequate ventilation provided • MSDS sheets available for substances classified as hazardous • MSDS sheets are current (i.e. not more than 5 years old) • Substances are stored safely and securely when not in use • All hazardous substances are clearly labeled • Hazardous substances are not stored in food and/or drink containers • Flammable and combustible liquids are stored away from ignition sources • Eye washes are located in immediate vicinity of chemical storage area • Barrier cream, or similar, available for rashes, allergies • Training provided in safe storage & handling practices • Training provided in use of fire protection equipment • A 'hazardous substances register in place
Workplace bullying and harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying & harassment policy displayed in the workplace • Bullying & harassment policy & procedures explained to all employees • Procedures for reporting & resolving incidents in place and explained to all employees • Workers have received information, instruction and training in relation to dealing with bullying and

	<p>harassment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers are trained in recognition of, communication for & management of bullying & harassment Procedures in place to ensure timely and appropriate counseling is provided to workers following a workplace bullying/harassment/aggressive/violent incident
Working alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a system in place for communicating with workers working alone The system ensures that workers have means of communicating in the event of emergency (e.g. mobile phones, duress alarms) The system requires regular contact to be maintained with workers to ensure safety & supervision The employer has knowledge of the location of all workers at all times during work shifts. Emergency phone numbers posted in every room
Working overhead or above shoulders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanical devices used Workers positioned at a height which allows work to occur without reaching above the head Training & instruction for workers on correct methods for accessing stored items Platform ladder purpose built for office environment